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Classification:	UNCLASSIFIED	Status:	[STAT]
Document Date:	29 Dec 90	Category:	[CAT]
Report Type:	Daily Report	Report Date:	
Report Number:	FBIS-EAS-90-251	UDC Number:	

Headline: KYODO Profiles Kaifu, Cabinet Ministers

Source Line: OW2912135690 Tokyo KYODO in English 1324 GMT 29 Dec 90

FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE:

1. [Text] Tokyo, Dec. 29 KYODO--Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu said after he took office in August 1989 that the number 29 has determined his fate as a politician and called for support over the next 29 years.

2. While he may not achieve 29 years in office--he would be 88 in the year 2018--the number 29 has appeared time and again in his career.

3. Most recently, he decided to reshuffle his cabinet Saturday, December 29 and he did.

4. The boyish-looking Kaifu, who turns 60 on Wednesday, favors the number 29 because he graduated from Waseda University in the 29th year of the Showa era on the Japanese calendar, 1954, and was first elected to the House of Representatives at the age of 29 in the 29th general election. His room in the Diet office building also bears 29, which he calls his lucky number.

5. When Kaifu became Japan's youngest lawmaker after being elected to the lower house in 1960, he vowed to become prime minister 29 years later. He made good on his pledge last August after his two predecessors stepped down over sex and money scandals and his party's loss of the upper house to the opposition.

6. He was born in 1931 in Nagoya, central Japan, where his father owned a photographic studio. He volunteered for the wartime youth air corps when he was a high school student but World War II ended before he entered the corps.

7. The prime minister, who had been regarded as a stopgap leader, was chosen primarily because of his youth, eloquence, and clean record in hopes of improving the image of the scandal-tainted Liberal Democratic Party.

8. Kaifu, whose trademark is a polka-dot tie, served twice as education minister before becoming premier. He also served as deputy chief cabinet secretary under the late Takeo Miki, his mentor, who

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Approved for Release

2/2010

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was in office from 1974-76.

9. He loves reading history books and is interested in unidentified flying objects (UFOs).

10. Kaifu met his wife, Sachiyo, in the office of another Diet member, where she was working as a clerk. They have one son, Masaki, who works for Kaifu as a secretary, and one daughter, Mutsumi, who is studying for the bar exam.

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